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NAFTA's results do not match expectations

DALLAS (AP) — A decade after United States, Canadian and Mexican leaders signed the North American Free Trade Agreement, predictions that the deal would lift Mexico into the so-called First World, or that it would vaporize jobs in the United States and keep wages low in Mexico have yet to become reality.

Much of Mexico remains trapped in poverty, but trade has ballooned, raising incomes and sheltering Mexico from economic woes throughout Latin America.

NAFTA's significance goes beyond economics. The agreement launched an era of economic, political and social intimacy between the United States and Mexico, two countries whose long, uneasy coexistence once won them the sobriquet of "distant neighbors."

The leaders who forged the agreement — President George Bush, Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari — will mark the 10th anniversary of NAFTA's signing at a conference Monday and Tuesday at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, D.C.

"NAFTA has created a new dynamic between the United States and Mexico," said Grant Aldonas, the undersecretary for international trade at the U.S. Commerce Department, who encountered a more prickly relationship as a junior diplomat in Mexico City 20 years ago.

"NAFTA has created a new dynamic between the United States and Mexico"

— Grant Aldonas
Undersecretary for trade

"The level of interaction between U.S. and Mexican officials on a range of issues that have to be discussed by neighbors has risen dramatically," he said recently.

Analysts are still debating the agreement's effects. NAFTA has helped generate unprecedented opportunities. But it also has visited economic dislocation on thousands.

Integration between the United States and Mexico has led to job losses for automobile workers in the Midwest to textile workers in El Paso.

Meanwhile, scores of Mexican companies that survived behind closed doors went out of business in the face of U.S. competition, a process also fueled by a severe economic crisis in 1994, the year NAFTA took effect.

Mexico still has millions of people whose poor education limits their ability to profit from free trade. Some critics say the border argue that the benefits outweigh the gains.

"We lost more jobs than we gained because of the cheap labor force that couldn't compete," Bertha Lujan, a labor leader who is now Mexico City comptroller, said Monday's editions of *Dallas Morning News*.

"Preference was given to multinational companies with advanced technologies to create jobs," she said. "The rest of the countryside got worse as the export of labor to the United States grew."

NAFTA has been a boon for some companies, chiefly in the automotive industry.

Mexico is now a key country in the global supply chain of such giants as General Motors Corp., Ford Motor and Delphi Corp. Many automotive companies, such as San Luis Corporation SA and Grupo Desc SA have profited.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Disney to put off further plans for amusement parks in China

HONG KONG (AP) — The Walt Disney Co. won't build a park in mainland China until at least 2010 and will focus instead on its Hong Kong park, the company said Monday.

Disney's statement following a weekend announcement that Shanghai signed a deal to open a Universal Studios theme park in 2006.

Disney had been in talks with Shanghai, the mainland's wealthiest city, but said it will now keep its sights set on the Hong Kong park, which is due to break ground Jan. 12 and is scheduled to open in 2005-2006.

"We have been in discussions about the potential of a park in Shanghai or another market in China for quite some time, but in all likelihood a second theme park in China would not open

before 2010," said Irene Chan, an Asia-Pacific spokeswoman for Disney.

Chan declined comment on Universal's plans, which were outlined in a preliminary agreement signed Saturday. But she indicated that Disney was still looking for potential mainland locations.

Man trapped in freezing car survives by burning paper

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) — A man trapped nearly a week in his car after it plunged into a ravine survived in the freezing cold by burning paper, melting snow for water and eating packs of fast-food sauce, rescuers say.

Robert Ward, 32, suffered a broken hip in the crash and could not get out of the car. He was freed Sunday by his friend Terry Likens, captain of the department where Ward is a volunteer emergency medical technician.

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- 1) What are your goals for managing your staff?
- 2) What do you believe is the role of the section for which you are applying?
- 3) What changes would you make to improve *The Battalion*? Pay particular attention to the position for which you're applying.

Staff Applicants

- 1) Why do you want to work at *The Battalion*, and what do you hope to accomplish?
- 2) What experience do you have that relates to the position for which you are applying? (include classes, seminars, etc.)
- 3) What changes do you feel would improve the quality of *The Battalion*? Give special attention to the section for which you're applying.

DEADLINE: 5 p.m. Friday, Dec. 13. Turn in applications at 014 (basement) Reed McDonald Bldg. Interviews will begin immediately after application deadline.

Extra applications available in the newsroom or online at <http://www.thebatt.com>

Good Luck on FINALS!

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